

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 3, 15, 17, 28, and 30, to read as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A user interface apparatus for use with a machine which can ~~receive~~ execute a number of user instructions to reach one of a plurality of possible machine states, wherein said user instructions can be input to said machine using at least natural language ~~as a mode of input~~, the user interface apparatus comprising:

status means for obtaining a current state of said machine achieved by executing an instruction received from a user;

generating means responsive to the obtained current state of said machine ~~to generate information to inform a user of, for generating~~ a natural language instruction which ~~can be input to~~ could have been executed by said machine to achieve the current state of said machine, irrespective of the instruction which has actually been executed to achieve the current state; and

output means for outputting ~~the generated~~ information to inform the user of the generated natural language instruction.

2. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 1, including means for receiving a request from a user of said machine for said information, wherein said generating means is adapted to be responsive to a received request to generate said information.

3. (Currently Amended) The user interface apparatus according to claim 1, including means for ~~receiving~~ receiving, from a user who has input a natural language instruction to arrive at the current state of said ~~machine~~ machine, a request for an appropriate natural language instruction to reach the current state, wherein said generating means is adapted to be responsive to a received request to generate said information as the requested appropriate natural language instruction.

4. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said status means is adapted to maintain a data structure containing attributes defining the current state of the machine, each attribute having a number of possible values.

5. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each attribute has at least one natural language fragment associated therewith, and said generating means is adapted to generate said information by building up a natural language instruction from said natural language fragments for said attributes defining the current state of said machine.

6. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said generating means is adapted to build said natural language instruction in accordance with natural language rules.

7. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said generating means is adapted to order said natural language fragments in accordance with order rules.

8. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said generating means is adapted to replace elements in the natural language instruction with other elements in dependence upon at least one of previous user interactions, preferred synonyms, user preferences, and natural language input recognition problems.

9. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said generating means is adapted to add natural language elements to said natural language instruction as at least one of a surrounding phrase and a politeness term.

10. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said generating means is adapted to generate said information as text.

11. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said output means is adapted to display said text.

12. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said output means includes speech synthesis means for synthesising speech from said text and audio output means for audibly outputting said speech.

13. (Previously Presented) The user interface apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said generating means is adapted to generate said information as speech data.

14. (Previously Presented) A machine which can receive a number of user instructions to reach one of a plurality of possible machine states, said machine including: instructions input means to input said user instructions to said machine using at least natural language as a mode of input; and the user interface apparatus according to claim 1.

15. (Currently Amended) A user interface method for use with a machine which can ~~receive~~ execute a number of user instructions to reach one of a plurality of possible machine states, wherein said user instructions can be input to said machine using at least natural language ~~as a mode of input~~, the method comprising:

obtaining a current state of said machine achieved by executing an instruction received from a user;

in response to the obtained current state of said machine, generating information ~~to inform a user of~~ a natural language instruction which ~~can be input to~~ could have been executed by said machine to achieve the current state of said machine, irrespective of the instruction which has actually been executed to achieve the current state; and

outputting ~~the generated~~ information to inform the user of the generated natural language instruction.

16. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 15, including receiving a request from a user of said machine for said information, wherein said information is generated in response to said request.

17. (Currently Amended) The user interface method according to claim 15, including ~~receiving~~ receiving, from a user who has input a natural language instruction to arrive at the current state of said ~~machine~~ machine, a request for an appropriate natural language instruction to reach the current state, wherein said information is generated as the requested appropriate natural language instruction in response to said request.

18. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 15, wherein the current state of said machine is obtained as a data structure containing attributes defining the current state of the machine, each attribute having a number of possible values.

19. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 18, wherein each attribute has at least one natural language fragment associated therewith, and said information is generated by building up a natural language instruction from said natural language fragments for said attributes defining the current state of said machine.

20. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 19, wherein said natural language instruction is built in accordance with natural language rules.

21. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 19, wherein said natural language fragments are ordered in said natural language instruction in accordance with order rules.

22. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 19, including replacing elements in the natural language instruction with other elements in dependence upon at least one of previous user interactions, preferred synonyms, user preferences, and natural language input recognition problems.

23. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 19, including adding natural language elements to said natural language instruction as at least one of a surrounding phrase and a politeness term.

24. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 15, wherein said information is generated as text.

25. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 24, wherein said text is displayed so as to be output to the user.

26. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 24, including speech data synthesis from said text, wherein said speech data is used to generate audible speech output to the user.

27. (Previously Presented) The user interface method according to claim 15, wherein said information is generated as speech data.

28. (Currently Amended) Program code for programming a processor to provide a user interface for a machine which can ~~receive~~ execute a number of user instructions to reach one of a plurality of possible machine states, wherein said user instructions can be input to said machine using at least natural language ~~as a mode of input~~, the program code being operable to program the processor to:

obtain a current state of said machine achieved by executing an instruction received from a user;

in response to the obtained current state of said machine, generate information to inform a user of a natural language instruction which can be input to could have been executed by said machine to achieve the current state of said machine, irrespective of the instruction which has actually been executed to achieve the current state; and

output ~~the generated~~ information to inform the user of the generated natural language instruction.

29. (Original) A carrier medium carrying the program code according to claim 28.

30. (Currently Amended) A user interface apparatus for use with a machine which can ~~receive~~ execute a number of user instructions to reach one of a plurality of possible machine

states, wherein said user instructions can be input to said machine using at least natural language ~~as a mode of input~~, the user interface apparatus comprising:

a status obtainer operable to obtain a current state of said machine achieved by executing an instruction received from a user;

a generator responsive to the obtained current state of said machine to generate ~~information to inform a user of~~ a natural language instruction which ~~can be input to~~ could have been executed by said machine to achieve the current state of said machine, irrespective of the instruction which has actually been executed to achieve the current state; and

an outputter operable to output ~~the generated~~ information to inform the user of the generated natural language instruction.